

Message Text

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SUBJ: LA REACTION TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REFS: A). STATE 148740, B) BRASILIA 2764

1. HIGH LEVEL AND AUTHORITATIVE BRAZILIAN REACTION TO THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA (REF A) IS SUMMARIZED IN REF B WHICH REPORTED THE MARCH 29 CONVERSATION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA AND THE SECRETARY.

2. TO SUPPLEMENT THAT CONVERSATION, EMBOFF HELD LONG AND INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION ABOUT BRAZILIAN ATTITUDES WITH CHIEF OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AFRICAN DIVISION BERNARDO PERICAS AND HIS DEPUTY ROBERTO ABREU CRUZ JUNE 13. SUPRISINGLY, PERICAS AND CRUZ DECLINED TO COMMENT ON GOB'S PERCEPTION OF THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE, INDICATING TOPIC WOULD HAVE TO BE THE SUBJECT OF MORE FORMAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN US AND GOB.

3. PERICAS SAID THAT IN HIS PERSONNAL VIEW THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS HAD A SEPARATE SET OF OBJECTIVES. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT WAS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION TO CINSIDER CUBAN PARTICIPATION AS A PAY-OFF FOR PAST AND LONG TERM SOVIET ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT.

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GOB, HE STRESSED, WAS CLEARLY ON RECORD AS AGAINST INTERFERENCE BY OUTSIDERS IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER STATES, AND BRAZIL VIEWED THE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA NOW DEVELOPING ALONG THESE LINES. PERICAS ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT EACH INTERVENTION WAS SUI GENERIS. THE AFRICANS WERE USING THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS FOR AFRICAN ENDS. AND PERHAPS FOR DIFFERENT REASONS IN EACH COUNTRY. SOVIET AND CUBAN AID HAD BEEN AVIALABLE AT A TIME WHEN

AFRICAN STATES NEEDED IT FURTHER THEIR OWN POLICY GOALS AND WESTERN AID HAD NOT. THE RELATIONSHIPS WERE MARRIAGES OF CONVENIENCE. PERICAS NOTED THAT, OVER THE LONG TERM, SOVIET/ CUBAN RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN STATES MIGHT CHANGE DRAMATICALLY AS THEY HAD BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND SUDAN THE UAR AND SOMALIA.

4. PERICAS SAID THE WEST MUST TRY TO SEE THE PROBLEM THROUGH AFRICAN EYES INSTEAD OF VIEWING AFRICA AS A STAGE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS. REGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE MIGHT BE A DIVISIVE ISSUE AMONG LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, PERICAS THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE SOME IDEOLOGICAL SYMPATHY FOR THE CUBAN EFFORT AMONG COUNTRIES LIKE JAMAICA AND GUYANA. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ON A MORE PRAGMATIC PLANE SOME LATIN GOVERNMENTS WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE CUBANS HEAVILY ENGAGED IN AFRICA RATHER THEN FOSTERING SUBVERSION IN THE HEMISPHERE.

4. COMMENT: PERICAS' COMMENTS PARALLEL THOSE OF FOREIGN MINISTER TO AMBASSADOR SAYRE DURING CALL WITH VISITING AMBASSADOR GERARD SMITH ON SILVEIRA JUNE 13. SILVEIRA TALKED AT LENGTH ON AFRICA AND COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S SPEECH AT ANNAPOLIS. HE WAS CAUTIOUS HOWEVER IN ASKING WHERE THIS LEADS US. HE THOUGHT IF US SAID TOO MUCH AND THEN DID NOT FOLLOW-UP IT WOULD EMBOLDEN THE SOVIETS. THE GOVERNMENTS IN AFRICA ARE VERY FRAGILE AND IF US SHOOK THEM TOO MUCH THEY MIGHT FALL. SILVEIRA SAID THAT IF US PUT IN ENOUGH RESOURCES WE COULD OF COURSE
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SOLVE BOTH PROBLEMS. BUT HE ASSUMED US WAS NOT TALKING ABOUT ARMED FORCES, AND COUNSELED CAUTION AND PATIENCE. SILVEIRA THOUGHT THAT THE SOVIETS WERE SO HEAVY-HANDED THAT THERE WOULD BE A REACTION. HE PROFESSED TO SEE IN REPORTING BY HIS AMBASSADORS THAT THIS WAS ALREADY HAPPENING. THE MINISTER WAS, OF COURSE, OPPOSED TO SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA. RECENT PRESS REPORTS ON STATEMENTS OF BRAZILIAN MILITARY OFFICERS INDICATE THAT THEY ARE EVEN MORE CONCERNED. IN SUM BRAZIL HAS AN ACTIVE INTEREST AND CONCERN BUT STILL THINKS THE AFRICANS SHOULD WORK IT OUT THEMSELVES.
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